



SCHOOLS ALLIANCE
for EXCELLENCE

AN EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT IS BETTER FOR ALL



Surrey Governance Support Programme Recruitment Pack



Welcome from Julia Katherine

Dear governor,

Your years of dedicated service have equipped you with insights and knowledge that could transform governance practice across our region. The education sector has long recognised that the most effective improvement comes from within, when experienced practitioners share their expertise to strengthen the system as a whole. Our Surrey Governance Support Programme embodies this principle, creating a powerful network of governors supporting governors to achieve excellence in governance across our region.

The challenges facing governing bodies today are too significant for any single organisation to tackle alone. We are seeking exceptional governors to join our volunteer community and help us address these challenges through structured peer support and expertise sharing.

Our programme offers exceptional professional development opportunities to support you in making a meaningful impact on governance quality across Surrey. You'll join a supportive community of committed volunteers, access high-quality training and resources, and gain recognition for your contribution to strengthening our governance system.

Whether you're passionate about sharing specialist expertise or dedicated to supporting governance processes to ensure independence and fairness, we have a role that can harness your experience for the benefit of others. Together, we can create a governance community where every governing body has access to the support, knowledge, and inspiration they need to excel.

The accompanying programme booklet provides detailed information about the various volunteer roles available and how you can contribute to this vital work. We would be delighted to discuss how your particular skills and experience could make a difference.

Yours sincerely,



Julia Katherine
Director of Education and
Lifelong Learning, Surrey County Council



Surrey Governance Support Programme

Our Vision: Governors Supporting Governors

Effective governance is fundamental to organisational success, yet many governing bodies face similar challenges: developing strategic thinking, strengthening accountability mechanisms, improving stakeholder engagement, and building leadership capacity. Rather than addressing these challenges in isolation, our programme harnesses the collective wisdom and experience of our most effective governors to create a sustainable support network that strengthens governance from within.

The programme operates on a simple but powerful premise: experienced governors possess invaluable knowledge and insights that, when shared strategically, can transform governance practice across multiple schools. By creating structured opportunities for peer learning and support, we're building a self-improving system where governance expertise is shared, developed, and sustained within our professional community.

Two Pathways to Make a Difference

We offer two distinct but complementary volunteer roles:

Specialist Advisory Governors provide an advisory service, working within seven expert domains: strategic planning, recruitment and diversity, monitoring and accountability, financial stewardship, governance effectiveness, stakeholder relationships, and leadership development.

These volunteers provide targeted, advisory support to governing bodies seeking to strengthen specific areas of practice. Drawing on their deep expertise, they offer guidance, share proven toolkits, and model effective practices through demonstration and shadowing opportunities. Specialist Advisory Governors do not become a member of the governing body but work alongside governor for a time limited period (no longer than 12 weeks).

Investigation and Panel Governors handle sensitive governance matters that require impartial investigation and adjudication in circumstances where governing bodies cannot undertake this work in their own setting. This critical role ensures accountability, fairness, and transparency across our governance community when serious concerns arise.

These volunteers undertake complaint or HR investigations and also participate in disciplinary panels, appeals processes, and complaint resolution hearings, ensuring that serious governance matters are handled with appropriate expertise and procedural fairness.

Investigations and Panel Governors:

About the Role

When schools face complex challenges, from handling complaints to making difficult decisions about pupil exclusions, they sometimes need experienced, impartial voices to ensure fairness and integrity. That's where Investigation and Panel governors like you come in.

As an Investigation and Panel governor, you'll step in to support other governing bodies when they need someone from outside their immediate community to provide objective oversight. Whether you're investigating a staff grievance or sitting on a complaint panel your role is vital in upholding the principles of natural justice that underpin good school governance.

We're looking for committed volunteers to join our expanding team of Investigation and Panel governors as part of Surrey's Governance Support Programme. This creates a mutually supportive network, if each governing body contributes a volunteer, we can build system-wide resilience where every school can access independent and free support when needed. The specialist training and hands-on experience you'll gain through this work will also enhance your effectiveness as a governor within your own school community.

Your experience and judgement will help ensure that crucial decisions are made fairly and transparently, ultimately benefiting the children, families, and staff in our local school communities. If you have the skills, integrity, and commitment to make a meaningful contribution to education in our area, we'd love to hear from you.



Investigations and Panel Governor:

Key responsibilities

Investigations

- + Plan and scope the investigation establishing appropriate timeframes.
- + Conduct fair and objective interviews to gather balanced evidence.
- + Review and analyse documentation to build a comprehensive understanding of the issues.
- + Maintain clear written records throughout the investigation.
- + Reach evidenced-based conclusions after making impartial determinations based on the balance of probabilities.
- + Deliver clear outcome reports/letters with actionable recommendations.

Panels

- + Prepare thoroughly for panel meetings including reviewing evidence packs and attending pre-meetings as necessary, raising any procedural queries to ensure secure and fair running of proceedings.
- + Ask appropriate questions to gather evidence and to seek clarification where needed to establish facts.
- + Ensure a fair and respectful process by maintaining an impartial approach while ensuring all participants feel respected, heard and supported throughout the proceedings.
- + Deliberate objectively considering all the evidence presented and reach decision based on the balance of probabilities.
- + Deliver clear outcome reports/letter with actionable recommendations.
- + Through both investigation and panel work you will help ensure that decisions impacting children and young people are fair and transparent.

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge and Experience	Serving governor or trustee with a minimum 1 year's experience.	Knowledge or experience of any of the following: - Complaints investigations or panels - HR investigations or panels - Pupil exclusion panels - Professional background in law, HR or education - Experience of managing people - Experience of chairing meetings or committees
Skills and Abilities	- Ability to maintain impartiality and objectiveness - Analytical skills and the ability to process complex information - Effective listening skills and the ability to ask appropriate questions - Effective written communication skills and the ability to clearly articulate findings - IT skills and the ability to review documents on-line and take part in virtual meetings - Ability to work collaboratively as part of a team	Ability to effectively chair panel meetings.



	Essential	Desirable
Personal Qualities and Attitudes	• Passionate about making a difference to young people's lives • Emotional intelligence and ability to act with empathy and sensitivity with all parties • A commitment to inclusive practices. • Be bound by strict confidentiality and discretion • Commitment to continuous learning and development	• Resilience to handle challenging and sensitive cases
Practical considerations	• Willingness to travel within Surrey • Flexibility to accommodate timing of investigations and panels	• Access to reliable transport

Why volunteer as an Investigation and Panel Governor?

This role offers a unique opportunity to make a meaningful difference while developing your own skills and expertise. As an Investigation and Panel governor, you'll be at the heart of ensuring fairness and integrity in school governance processes that directly impact children's educational journeys. The benefits of volunteering include:

- + Accelerating your own professional development by gaining valuable transferable skills that will enhance both your career and personal effectiveness.
- + Enhance your own governance by bringing back specialist knowledge, training and experience that will significantly strengthen your effectiveness as a governor in your own school setting.
- + Build powerful networks by become part of a wider team that are dedicated to fostering educational excellence and equity across all schools.

Specialist Advisory Governors:

About the Role

Specialist Advisory Governors are experienced governance volunteers who provide advisory support to governing bodies who have identified that they need to strengthen their governance practice. Working within one or more of seven specialist domains, Specialist Advisory Governors share their expertise, knowledge and practical experience to help governing bodies develop effective governance that supports improved outcomes for children and young people.

Operating through a structured but flexible framework, Specialist Advisory Governors work collaboratively with chairs, governors and governance professionals for a specific period of time to develop practice in a key area identified for development. They will share proven approaches and model effective practice to enable sustainable improvement to governance capacity and effectiveness. This role focuses purely on advisory support and Specialist Advisory Governors will not be embedded into the governing bodies they work with.

Key Responsibilities

- + Provide advisory support to governing bodies within your designated domain(s) of expertise.
- + Share relevant toolkits, frameworks and resources to support governance improvement.
- + Review and provide guidance on governance documentation and procedures.
- + Model effective questioning techniques, monitoring approaches and compliance frameworks
- + Facilitate shadowing opportunities within your own governance context to demonstrate good practice.
- + Support the development of governance action plans aligned with school improvement priorities.
- + Maintain accurate records of advisory support and impact.
- + Participate in regular supervision and training to ensure the consistent quality of support.
- + Act as an additionally appointed Local Authority Governor or Interim Executive Board member where a school is eligible for intervention.

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge and Experience	• Serving governor or governance professional with a minimum of 4 years' experience. • Governance impact • Knowledge in one or more key specialist areas such as, strategic planning, financial literacy and oversight, etc	• Experience as a chair or vice chair • Experience of governance during organisational change or challenge • Experience of creating and working towards governance improvement plans • Knowledge of governance in multiple contexts
Skills and Abilities	• Strong interpersonal and communication skills • Ability to build rapport and influence governance practice constructively • Analytical skills to diagnose governance strengths and areas for development • Ability to deliver challenging messages sensitively and effectively	• Coaching and mentoring skills

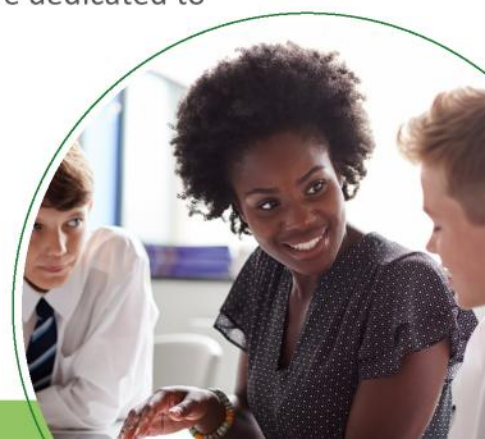


	Essential	Desirable
Personal Qualities and Attitudes	• Genuine commitment to supporting others' development • Emotional intelligence and commitment to inclusive practices • Integrity, discretion and maintaining confidentiality • Commitment to continuous learning and development • Collaborative approach to working	• Resilience and adaptability
Practical considerations	• Willingness to travel within Surrey • Flexibility to support governing bodies face to face and virtually	• Access to reliable transport

Why volunteer as a Specialist Advisory Governor?

This role offers a unique opportunity to make a meaningful difference to governance across Surrey while developing your own expertise and networks. As a Specialist Advisory Governor, you'll join a community of committed volunteers who share your passion for governance excellence and improving outcome for children and young people. The benefits of volunteering include:

- + Access high-quality training, resources and on-going supervision
- + Deepen your governance knowledge and refine advisory and coaching skills
- + Build powerful networks by become part of a wider team that are dedicated to fostering educational excellence and equity across all schools.



How to Apply

To arrange an informal, confidential discussion about these roles please contact Penny Garry via email: govsupport@schoolsallexcel.com.

Please read the information in this pack carefully. If you decide to apply, complete the application form and return it. Your application should reference details from the pack, especially the person specification. Highlight any relevant experience and personal qualities you would bring to the role.

Please send your completed application to govsupport@schoolsallexcel.com





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